

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 035807
ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 035807

CANALNEGS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: U.S. PANAMA TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: ACTIVITIES REPORT

I.

THIS IS MESSAGE NO. 3 FROM THE DEPARTMENT APPLICABLE TO THE
FEBRUARY 1977 NEGOTIATIONS IN PANAMA, DESPATCHED FROM ARA/
PAN AT 5:30 PM ON FEBRUARY 16.

II. BRIEFING ITEMS.

A. MEDIA -- PRESS, RADIO AND TV CONTINUE TO CARRY BRIEF
NEWS ITEMS ON NEGOTIATIONS. ALMOST ALL CENTER ON NEGOTIA-
TORS' ARRIVAL STATEMENTS AND TORRIJOS REITERATION OF 2000
DEADLINE. IN ADDITION, UPI ITEM FROM PANAMA REPORTS THAT
NEWSMAN (SIC) FERNANDO ELETA WAS TOLD BY AMBASSADOR
LINOWITZ DURING A LUNCH ON CONTADORA THAT HE HAD HOPES FOR
AN EARLY TREATY. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR FEBRUARY 15
EDITORIAL PRAISES CARTER ADMINISTRATION FOR CONTINUING THE
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NEGOTIATIONS, STATES THAT NEUTRALITY IS MOST DIFFICULT
REMAINING ISSUE, AND FURTHER OBSERVES THAT "UNLESS CARTER
ADMINISTRATION IS ADEPT AT JUSTIFYING THE SETTLEMENT TO THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE, TREATY RATIFICATION COULD BECOME A MAJOR
ISSUE."

B. CONGRESSIONAL -- AP ITEM FROM PANAMA REPORTS ANTI-

TREATY COMMENTS BY VISITING ARIZONA CONGRESSMEN STUMP (D) AND RUDD (R), BOTH FRESHMEN. LABELLING THE NEGOTIATIONS A GIVEAWAY, THEY SAY AMERICAN PUBLIC NOT BEING TOLD THE WHOLE STORY AND PREDICT GREAT OPPOSITION TO SENATE APPROVAL OF TREATY. RUDD SAYS IF CANAL IS TO BE RETURNED, RECIPIENTS SHOULD BE COLOMBIA OR SPAIN OR PERHAPS INCAS.

III. ACTION ITEMS.

A. WE HAVE RECEIVED FOLLOWING LETTER FROM WHITE HOUSE FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO RESPOND. QUOTE. DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PANAMA CANAL COMPANY HAS FORWARDED TO ME THE ATTACHED RESOLUTION MAKING A STRONG RECOMMENDATION THAT EMPLOYEES OF THE CANAL ENTERPRISE BE MORE FULLY INFORMED OF TREATY ISSUES AND DECISIONS DIRECTLY AFFECTING THEIR CAREERS AND THEIR LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

WHILE I RECOGNIZE OUR NATIONAL INTEREST IN A NEW PANAMA CANAL TREATY AND THE FACT THAT SUCH AGREEMENTS CANNOT BE DEVELOPED IN PUBLIC, I DO FEEL THAT NOW IS THE TIME TO INFORM CANAL ZONE RESIDENTS OF THE BASIC UNITED STATES POSITION REGARDING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND PROTECTIONS. BY SO DOING, DECLINE IN THE MORALE OF THE WORKFORCE WILL BE CHECKED, AND POSSIBLY REVERSED AND OPERATION OF THE CANAL WILL BE IMPROVED THEREBY. RESPECTFULLY YOURS, MARTIN R. HOFFMAN. UNQUOTE.

TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM INDICATED INCLINATION WAS FOLLOWING
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DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT: QUOTE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CORRESPONDENCE OF FEBRUARY 3 RECOMMENDING FULLER INFORMATION TO CANAL ZONE RESIDENTS ABOUT THE STATUS OF TREATY NEGOTIATIONS.

I HAVE INSTRUCTED THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP LOCAL RESIDENTS ADEQUATELY INFORMED OF THE PROGRESS OF THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AND ASSURE YOU OF MY CONCERN THAT THE RIGHTS OF U.S. CITIZENS BE FULLY PROTECTED. UNQUOTE.

GIVEN IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE CONCERNS AND POSSIBILITY LETTER WOULD BE HELPFUL MEANS OF PROVIDING ASSURANCES, REQUEST YOUR ADVICE AND COMMENT.
HARTMAN

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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